

I am writing on behalf of Wilbraham Public Access in response to the FCC inquiry, Annual Assessment of the Status of MB Docket No. 12-203 Competition in the Market for the Delivery of Video Programming.

I am the Executive Director, a department head working for the Town of Wilbraham.

Wilbraham Public Access is a Public, Educational and Governmental community TV station with 3 channels (5, 19 & 20) serving the Town of Wilbraham and also seen in the Town of Hampden Massachusetts. (Approximately 6,000 subscribers)

We cover community, school and government meetings like Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance, Housing Authority etc. The meeting coverage of evening meetings has been requested by residents especially senior citizens who may not drive after dark, but also find it easier to hear the audio on TV rather than a meeting room.

WPA trains students in Elementary, Middle, High School and College as well as community volunteers in communication, production both in field and studio and editing. We allow residents (and students) the ability to share their voice with their communities.

WPA has volunteers from all ages (10 to 75 years old) who work together or their own to create programming for the community.

WPA is in charge of the Town Facebook Page that helps inform the community of what's going on in an emergency. It is used for weather emergencies (NWS notices) which was tested after a tornado, microburst and early snowstorm that hit the town in 2011. All three events took out the power to the community for several days. The Facebook page allowed Town Officials and emergency services the ability to communicate with residents in times of need. (Facebook search - "Town of Wilbraham Massachusetts" or link from the website wilbraham-ma.gov).

The cable provider in Wilbraham is Charter Communications. Two small neighborhoods in Wilbraham on the west side of town also have a second provider but the majority of the Town only have cable and internet access through Charter Communications. This is a problem in that there is no competition and residents call to complain that the Town and WPA have not brought in competitors. The Town and WPA have looked for secondary providers, but have been unable to find competitors as it is not cost effective for a company to build a fiber optic system in a small community.

The Town has had issues with Charter responding to residents service complaints.

We also take complaints from residents about the constant rise in the cost of cable and internet access. Residents have stated that they don't want to use satellite dish over cable since they will lose the community TV station.

The funding for WPA comes from the cable company and there is a fear that if that funding ends there will not be another way to fund community TV in a small community like ours.

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